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SEN. JACQUE CHEERS PRO-LIFE PROVISION ENACTED INTO LAW

Constraint barring genetic counselors from promoting abortion ironically approved by Gov. Evers

MADISON, WI... In one of the more surprising outcomes of this legislative session, State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere) praised the enactment of a new pro-life measure contained in 2021 [Senate Bill 259](#) (now 2021 Act 251), signed into law by Gov. Tony Evers on Friday afternoon. Amended into the genetic counselor licensing legislation is a key protection against lethal discrimination on the basis of a genetic condition, enshrining as a prohibited practice for licensees that “A genetic counselor may not encourage an expectant parent to obtain an elective abortion.”

The language was added into the bill earlier this year with approval from both legislative chambers, following prolonged attempts by both Sen. Jacque and State Rep. Chuck Wichgers (R-Muskego) to incorporate language that would address concerns of coercion to abort pregnancies based on the real or presumed presence of a genetic condition. One such example of genetic discrimination is seen in the stratospheric abortion rate for children diagnosed with Down Syndrome. In the U.S., a 2012 review found a range from 61% up to 93% of those diagnosed with Down Syndrome in the womb who were aborted.

“I greatly appreciate the efforts of Rep. Wichgers, the stakeholders behind the bill, the bill’s authors, Assembly Committee Chairman Shae Sortwell and, surprisingly, even Gov. Evers in coming together to make this important pro-life safeguard a reality and a model for other states considering similar legislation,” concluded Sen. Jacque.

Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin’s First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.

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